

Vessel Numbers

2.000 Vessels Which Must be Registered in California (Vehicle Code §9850)

The following vessels must be registered:

- All undocumented motor boats.
- All undocumented sailboats with motors.
- All undocumented sailboats over 8 feet in length.
- Amphibious vehicles (vessels).
- Houseboats (see the following section for exception).
- Inflatable vessels with motors.
- Personal watercraft (ski type vessels such as jet ski, wet bike).
- Shuttle Craft. "Shuttle Craft" is a full size, open bow, jet boat similar to a barge. It is powered **and** steered by any personal watercraft (PWC).

2.005 Vessels Not Required to be Registered (Vehicle Code §9873 and Code of Regulations §190.19)

The following vessels may be registered at the owner's option:

- Vessels propelled solely by oars or paddles.
- Sailboats 8 feet or less in length without motors.
- A public vessel of the United States, another state, or subdivision of another state.
- A ship's lifeboat. (A dinghy is not a lifeboat.)
- A vessel of another country temporarily using the waters of this state.
- A vessel bearing an assigned number in full force, which has been issued pursuant to federal law or a federally approved number system of another state, provided it has not changed its state of principal use and has not been used within this state for a period in excess of 90 consecutive days.
- Non-motorized surfboards over 8 feet in length, propelled by sail, that requires the operator to hold the mast upright.

- A floating, stationary residential dwelling not designed to have power of its own, which is dependent for utilities to a source on shore, and has a permanent sewage hookup on shore.
- A vessel not using or on the water of this state.
- Racing vessels brought into this state exclusively for racing purposes and remaining for less than 90 days, providing the state of origin also exempts such vessels.

2.010 California Assigned Vessel Numbers (Vehicle Code §9857)

Permanent vessel registration numbers are assigned to undocumented vessels in accordance with the national system. In California, these numbers are prefixed by the letters “CF” followed by four numbers and a two-letter suffix (e.g., CF 1234 AB). A number series will not be issued with the letter suffix containing I, O, or Q.

2.015 Pleasure and Commercial Numbers

Pleasure and commercial numbers are any numbers not reserved as a special number series. (See §2.025) Pleasure and commercial numbers are issued in the department's field offices and by agents to any pleasure or commercial vessel.

2.020 Special Numbers (Code of Regulations §190.08)

Special numbers are CF numbers issued only to the vessels listed below by the Vessel Section of Registration Processing Unit II in Sacramento Headquarters and are not issued by agents.

<i>Special Number</i>	<i>Issued to...</i>
DA-DZ	Dealers
LA, LB, LD, LE	Livery (rental) vessels and vessels carrying passengers
LC	Livery (rental) vessels owned by a city or county, fee exempt
MA-MY	Manufacturers
MZ	Other than dealers or manufacturers
XC	Vessels of a city, county, district, or other municipality, fee exempt

<i>Special Number</i>	<i>Issued to...</i>
XF	Federal vessels, fee exempt
XS	State vessels, fee exempt
YB	Vessels owned by certain youth groups, fee exempt

2.025 Application for Special Numbers (Livery, Government Agencies, Youth Groups)

For new or nonresident vessels:

<i>If the use of the vessel is...</i>	<i>then complete an Application for Boat Registration Number (BOAT 101) and collect...</i>	<i>issue a miscellaneous receipt...</i>
Livery (nonexempt)	appropriate proof of ownership, original registration fee and use tax, if due (See Chapter 3 for fees.)	and a sticker.
Fee Exempt Gov't Agency	no fee	as a "No Fee" item.
Fee Exempt Youth Group	no fee. The Boat 101 must be signed by an authorized agent of the youth group attesting to the purpose of the organization.	as a "No Fee" item.

All special numbers are issued and mailed to the customer by the Registration Processing Unit II in Sacramento. Livery and fee-exempt special numbers **are not** transferable unless the new owner qualifies for the same kind of special number.

2.030 Application for Special Numbers (Dealers and Manufacturers)

Boat dealers and manufacturers may secure a special number for demonstrating or testing unregistered vessels. The number must not be permanently affixed to any vessel and it is not transferable.

- **Original Applications**—The requirements are a completed Application for Dealer-Manufacturer Boat Registration Number (BOAT 101A) with “Dealer” or “Manufacturer” checked and the applicant’s Board of Equalization (BE) account (permit) number and the original registration fee. (December applications should also include the renewal fee.)
- **Renewal Applications**—A new completed BOAT 101A (see originals above) and the registration fee must be submitted for any dealer or manufacturer vessel number that is not renewed prior to midnight of the expiration date. A Certificate of Nonoperation **is not** acceptable.

The application requirements for special use vessels are the same as for a dealer/manufacturer application. An example of “**special use**” would be a marina borrowing vessels from vessel manufacturers throughout the United States for use in movie productions and then returning the vessels to the manufacturers at the end of filming. The requirements are:

- A completed Application for Dealer/Manufacturer Boat Registration Number (BOAT 101A).
- A Miscellaneous Statements of Fact (REG 256) from the applicant stating where the vessel was obtained, the purpose and location of operation, approximately how long the vessel will be operated, and disposition of the vessel when the special use ends.
- The original registration fee.

2.035 Transfer of Special Numbers

Transfer of Livery and Fee Exempt Special Numbers

Livery and fee-exempt special numbers **cannot** be transferred unless the new owner qualifies for the same kind of special number. The “LC” livery series **cannot** be transferred to a nongovernmental livery operator. A Miscellaneous Statements of Fact (REG 256) must be submitted with the application explaining the buyer’s qualifications for the special number and request for use tax exemption **if** the buyer is using the vessel “for hire” (passengers or property). Exempt vessels transferred between federal agencies or between state agencies **are not** subject to use tax.

Transfer from Special Number to Pleasure Number

When a livery or fee exempt vessel is transferred to an owner **not** qualified for the special number, a pleasure number is issued. A Miscellaneous Statements of Fact

(REG 256) stating the vessel will be used for pleasure only **must** be submitted with the transfer application. The renewal fee is due if the former owner was fee exempt. (See Chapter 3 for fees.)

2.040 **Hull Identification Number (HIN) (VC §§9857, 9871, 9871.5 and CCR §190.15)**

The Hull Identification Number (HIN) is a unique combination of letters and/or numbers affixed to the vessel. California law requires all registered vessels to have a HIN. Federal regulations effective November 1, 1972, require vessel manufacturers to assign a HIN to each vessel the manufacturer builds. Noncomplying manufacturers are investigated by the U.S. Coast Guard. Since August 1984, the manufacturer's HIN consists of a combination of 12 alpha and numeric characters.

Example of current HIN format:

BAY	3561G	B	0	90
three position manufacturer ID code (BAY-LINER)	five character serial number (alpha/numeric)	alpha character identifying month of manufacture	last number in year of manufacture	last two numbers of model year

The U.S. Coast Guard has assigned a HIN format for departmental use when assigning a HIN to vessels that are homemade or do not have an established identification number.

Example of HIN format for homemade vessels/vessels without a valid HIN:

CFZ	1234A	H	1	91
indicates a California issued HIN	first five characters of the CF number (see §2.015)	alpha character indicating month of manufacture	year of manufacture or year fees paid, if manufacture date is unknown	last two numbers of year of manufacture or year fees paid, if year of manufacture is unknown

The HINs must be displayed on each hull (two locations). A HIN must be affixed in a visible location **and** in an unexposed location on the interior of the boat or beneath a fitting or item of hardware.

Each vessel application must contain a HIN. The U. S. Coast Guard will investigate manufacturers who do not comply with the regulations.

From 1972 to 1984, HINs were designed in the following formats:

KAW	12345	1280	X
three position manufacturer ID code (Kawasaki)	five character serial number (alpha/numeric)	month and year of manufacture (alpha-encoded or numeric)	additional, optional characters for builders' purposes

KAW	12345	L	73E	X
three position manufacturer ID code (Kawasaki)	five character serial number (alpha/numeric)	encoded to show month	month and year of certification	additional, optional characters for builders' purposes

Summary:

Federal regulations require vessel manufacturers to assign a HIN to each vessel the manufacturer builds. At the vessel owner's request, the DMV will assign a Hull Identification Number (HIN) for "no fee" to a vessel which **does not** have a HIN. The Certificate of Ownership and a Miscellaneous Statements of Fact (REG 256) stating the vessel does not have a HIN and the name of the builder (if known) must be submitted.

The department **will not** assign a HIN:

- to a 1973 or newer vessel which already has less than a 12-character HIN.
- to a vessel "commercially manufactured" after 1972.
- if documentation indicates an existing HIN for the vessel.

If the DMV's records **do not** show a HIN for a vessel, but the owner completes a Miscellaneous Statements of Fact (REG 256) showing a HIN, DMV will correct the record.

2.045 ABCs of the California Boating Law (Harbors and Navigation Code §651.5)

Pursuant to the Federal Boating Act, and in order to ensure that each original California registrant and transferee is apprised of current vessel safety and registration information, each applicant issued a Permanent Vessel Number ("CF" number) and Certificate of Number shall also be issued a copy of the Department of Boating and Waterways publication, *ABCs of the California Boating Law* (BOAT 3). These booklets may be obtained from the DMV and are also available on the Department of Boating and Waterways website at www.dbw.ca.gov.